



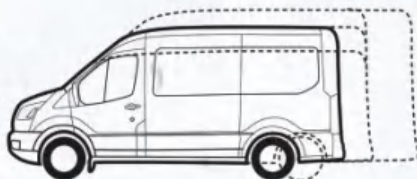
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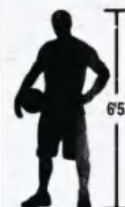
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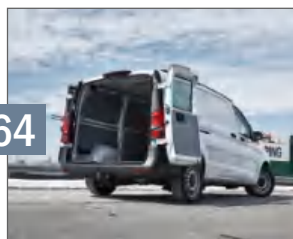
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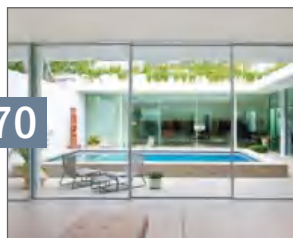
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## Editorial

BY ERIKA TAYLOR, CHIEF OF CONTENT

# And the Winners Are ...

I'm a fan of the big picture. Literally. I like large, powerful photographs that inspire laughter, sadness, curiosity, and awe. For me, telling a story that utilizes images almost as much as words is more likely to create a memorable impact.

But I'm also a fan of fairness and giving credit where credit is due. That's why when I saw last year's design awards issue I completely understood the logic behind running a photo of every winning project: Platinum, Gold, Silver, and Bronze. The judges had decided that each of those designs were worthy of an award, so shouldn't they all be honored with a picture? Of course ... in a perfect world.

Unfortunately, looking at last year's issue, some of the photos were so small I couldn't tell if the spot on the ceiling was a can light or a tiny fleck of icing from my cinnamon roll. The number of pages we were able to devote to the awards weren't doing justice to the wonderful projects, nor were they helping

our audience learn more about them.

So, this year—after giving it much thought—we decided to only publish photos of the projects that are receiving Platinum and Gold awards. It was a difficult choice, but when you see how great the package looks, we hope you'll agree that we made the right call.



**It was a difficult choice,  
and we hope you agree  
we made the right call.**

One thing I know you'll agree with is that the honorees this year are stellar. And there's something for everyone. So whether you like looking at old churches (page 26), gorgeous contemporary façades (page 34), or are interested in creative uses of reclaimed materials (page 32), these projects run the gamut.

Finally, the only people I can say worked even harder than us putting this issue together were the judges. I spent some time in the room as they pored over each project, and I came away with tremendous respect for their design acumen and commitment to the integrity of the judging process. You'll find direct evidence of this in the "What the Judges Said" section that appears alongside the winners' writeups.

Enjoy! PR



*The judges, from left to right: Robi Kirsic, TimeLine Renovations; Vince Weber, Normandy Design Build Remodeling; Lana Galloway, LaMantia Design & Construction; and Michael Ansel, Otogawa-Ansche Design+Build.*

Contact me at [etaylor@sgcmail.com](mailto:etaylor@sgcmail.com) or 972.369.9212

## LEAD LEVELS

I find it interesting that remodelers are getting the blame for lead poisoning (“Gray Area: Lead Paint and Freddie Gray,” June 2015). Has anyone studied remodelers and their families and the effects on them?

I’ve been in the remodeling business for 35 years now and have specialized in vintage home additions. I was awarded Preservationist of the Year by our local heritage association. Upon hearing about the lead rule, and knowing that I have been exposed to all things in old houses, and having remodeled my own vintage home with the help of my pregnant wife and young daughter (and continuing to this day), I decided to get a lead test.

My two daughters had low levels and mine was the highest, at 4µg/dl. If you research lead, you will find it in many things including your drinking water, cosmetics, vitamins, antique furniture, toys, and jewelry. Many folk remedies contain

lead. Also hobbies like pottery, stained glass, fishing, etc., [involve exposure to lead]. You can read reports of many food items containing lead, including rice, seafoods of all kinds, and lamb. Dole, Gerber, and Del Monte Foods were all sued for lead in their products.

Blaming remodelers for lead poisoning and making us jump through hoops and complete mounds of paperwork to satisfy some political activists is the wrong approach. Let the consumer decide what’s best. Worst case, bring back the opt-out option and let choice and liberty prevail.

*Scott Foley (via email)*

*Foley Construction  
Fullerton, Calif.*

Recently I encountered a homeowner who, being an architect and city planner, wanted me to ignore the lead issue throughout his 19th-century

vacation home and just clean the accumulated lead dust from years of abraded trim, doors, sash, and jambs so he could rent to a family with young children. I was shocked by the lack of concern for his tenants as well as for what could be a lawsuit for him going forward. Instead, his concern was more for the lack of rental income than for that family’s health issues in the future.

I left the job and now am suing for my outstanding balance. I could not continue to work for someone as unscrupulous as that. He holds me accountable for loss of his rental income because I made them aware of the need to de-lead the entire interior before renting the property.

I wish all contractors would stop and think: Is a quick buck really worth it?

The answer is obvious: It’s never worth it, and those that go along and keep breaking the law and national building codes, SHAME ON YOU!

*Lou (via ProRemodeler.com)*

## MENTORING IN THE INDUSTRY

I enjoy *Professional Remodeler*, but I’ve been fairly busy as of late and the magazines piled up. Finally last week I read some of my back copies. In the April 2015 editorial, Erika Taylor wrote about a lack of mentorship in the trades. I’m a licensed contractor and a union carpenter, formally from San Francisco, now semi-retired. All I have to say to your article is that it’s standard in all the union trades to have five years of apprenticeship to become a journeyman. It is also standard to give work assignments to pairs of workers. There is a lot to be learned from this method. I agree with the article that there is not enough mentoring in the unorganized trades, which leads to large turnover of workers. I’m not trying to sell unions to anyone, just want you not to ignore a large segment of the building trades where mentoring is ongoing.

*John Garibaldi (via email)*



## SAW SAFETY

I enjoyed Erika Taylor’s editorial about the Bosch table saw (“Marketing Saw Safety,” May 2015). They have a great idea and the table saw is a great place to start, but I’d never buy one because I think that would give everyone a false sense of security. The one I saw at the JLC Live show was someone pushing a hot dog into a saw blade and the blade stopping before any serious damage was done. I would like to see someone jamming something into the blade fast. That is how most amputations happen. I know this for a fact, as I’m missing two fingers from a router table. I was pushing a piece of wood into the router, the wood shot out, and my hand continued into the router bit. Ouch! (That’s not what I actually said.)

Another point: If you get overconfident with the use of a table saw that has the brake, then you could have problems when you switch to a router or a band saw

or chop saw thinking they’ll stop as well.

I don’t agree with Taylor’s friends’ and their theory of “I’m a professional.” That’s a kiss of death. I’m a professional and always practiced safety, and taught safety to my employees. Accidents happen.

I do believe this is a great place to start, but it will take years of research, testing, more research, and a few lawsuits against the manufacturer.

*Douglas J. Smith, MHBR #142 (via email)*

*Housewright Construction Co.  
Lusby, Md.*

Read your article about the saw with interest. I always wanted to buy one but could not seem to afford it, even though I cut off the tip of my finger in a saw malfunction. ... My table saws were never near the cost of the safety saw. In retrospect, it was penny wise and pound foolish.

*Kerry Roberts (via email)*

*Belle Vernon, Pa.*

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# Working It

I shouldn't be writing this because I'm on vacation. For those of you who, like many small-business owners, are unfamiliar with the concept, a vacation is commonly understood to mean "an extended period of recreation." Most people associate a vacation with travel, but a modern variation—the "staycation"—suggests that literally "vacating" is not the essential feature. It is not so much what you do, but what you avoid doing. And what you avoid is work.

That's harder to do than it used to be. Years ago, before notebook computers became commodities, you could literally leave work behind when you left the office because most critical work documents were stored on hard drives in a local desktop computer. That's not a viable strategy anymore, even if you "forget" to take your notebook with you, because a lot of digital information is now stored in the cloud

where it's accessible no matter where we are or what computer we're using. Convenient, but also oppressive.

And then there are smartphones. While they are a boon to communications between office and field, and make subcontractors and suppliers available seven days a week, they are a scourge to those with workaholic tendencies because they make it impossible to fully "vacate" your business.

The physical and mental health benefits of a vacation are well established. Whether it's a period of recreation or just the ability to engage in something other than our businesses, the time away from the regular work routine recharges our batteries so that we return with fresh ideas and a reinforced sense of commitment.

But for a small-business owner, being able

to take time off is a significant milestone. It marks the first step in the transition from a business that depends completely on its owner, to one that has begun to replace the owner with systems and standardized practices that can be maintained by trusted employees.

I learned this lesson the hard way after the recession of 1980, but before the ensuing boom. I threw my back out and missed about 10 days of work. At the time, my company was finishing up a custom home and had not yet started a couple of smaller remodeling projects. I spent those 10 days



**A good vacation is good business. If you can't get away, you have a problem.**

laying flat on my back, thinking about how dependent my company was on my being able to work.

After that I began to disentangle myself from parts of the business that could be delegated to capable employees. It didn't happen overnight and, yes, there was backsliding, but it simplified my workday and gave me more personal time. And the employees who took on new responsibility gained confidence and got better at their jobs.

It shouldn't take a crisis to precipitate this change. The sooner you start, the faster you will reap the benefits. (And, by the way, those benefits also accrue to employees who take vacations. Paid vacations.)

So why am I writing this while on vacation? Because I am a great procrastinator.

And besides, it's raining today. **PR**

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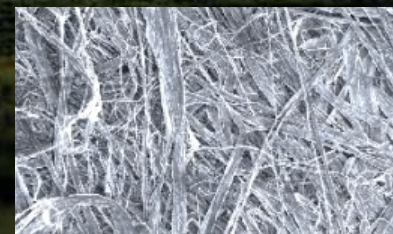


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## 7 Tips for Finding Great Talent

**T**here are many good remodeling companies, but only a small percentage become great. What makes the difference typically has little to do with the quality of construction and everything to do with objective factors, such as business acumen, as well as variables that are more difficult to define, such as leadership and company culture.

One area where I really see a stark difference between good and great companies is in the caliber of their employees. The higher percentage of “A” players in great companies is no accident; it’s the direct result of how those companies approach recruiting. In great companies, talent recruitment is less of a human-resources exercise and more of a sales and marketing initiative.

Here are seven factors you should consider when developing your recruitment strategies.

**1 Use data to set value.** Treat the recruitment of employees the same way you treat generating leads for prospective clients. That means balancing subjective perceptions about employees—such as “They are loyal,” or “They are hardworking”—with facts and figures, such as the amount of profit they can produce, the savings from avoiding mistakes, or the long-term benefit of delighting clients. In addition to analyzing all of the hidden costs of hiring (placing ads, interviewer time, onboarding, etc.), it’s helpful to track retention rates as well as job-specific data—weekly or monthly gross profit per carpenter, for example.

**2 Make recruitment a priority.** Until it is a top priority, you may be successful, but that success will be built on good luck. And when your luck runs out, if you don’t have the right people on your team, it will be hard to turn things around. If you understand that having great talent can reduce stress, create delighted clients, increase profits, and position your company for growth, then you will find a way to move talent acquisition to the top of your list.

**3 Be a hunter, not a farmer.** Good companies are like farmers who plant seeds and patiently wait for something to grow. Great companies are like hunters who put themselves in the right place at the right time, identify specific individuals, and actively pursue them.

**4 Treat recruiting as a sales and marketing project.** Good employees are like prospective clients: they are out there, but you need a marketing strategy to attract them and a sales pitch to sell them the value you offer. Some great companies regularly conduct “discovery day”

seminars to identify prospects, then roll that into individual interviews. Others use PR campaigns to attract people to fill specific positions. Still others enter contests, such as “the best places to work,” to draw attention to their company. Some talk up their desire to hire great people at networking groups; others use blogs to post cool things their team and their business are doing.

**5 Use both high-tech and high-touch approaches.** Great companies use digital marketing and social media to create dialogue with great talent, then build a “talent database” they can turn to as needed. But it’s important to temper technology with a personal approach. Start with just getting to know each other over coffee or a beer. Follow the conversation where it leads, and if you think there may be a fit, suggest another meeting. The point is to develop a rapport that leaves the door open.

**6 Tap your business partners.** Alliances can be a great avenue for finding talent. As an example, if you call your top-five lumberyard contacts or reps and ask them each to give you one name of a salesperson or a carpenter, three

out of five will come through. Subcontractors can also be a good source. Most know who the best carpenters or project managers or salespeople are, but they won’t know you are looking for employees unless you ask them. And don’t forget your clients. Many of them are businesspeople who can steer you to accountants and administrative staff.

**In great companies, recruitment is less of an HR exercise and more of a sales and marketing initiative.**

**7 Deputize your team.** Another option is to put incentives in place that will encourage members of your own team to join the search for talent. A tiered reward system can work well—for example, \$100 for a meaningful interview, \$250 if the referral is hired, and \$500 or more if the new hire stays for six months. However, incentives will work only if you first make sure your team understands the value that new recruits bring and the opportunities for growth that this creates; otherwise, they will see it as competition for their job.

Success may not come as easily as you hope, and even good companies fall into the trap of concluding that great talent just isn’t available in the marketplace. Great companies know that talented people are all around them, redouble their efforts to find those people, and start the dialogue. Then as they say, “the real work begins after the sale.” Happy hunting. **PR**

*Mark Richardson, CR, is an author, columnist, and business growth strategist. He authored the best-selling book, *How Fit is Your Business?* as well as his latest book, *Fit to Grow*. He can be reached at [mrichardson@mgrichardson.com](mailto:mrichardson@mgrichardson.com) or 301.275.0208.*



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## The Cost of Landing the Job

If you're a small remodeling sole proprietor you're probably working a very long week and wondering where all your time goes. Time spent at the jobsite is fairly easy to account for, but that's not the case for many of the other functions you perform for your business.

Take generating work, for example. People talk about "backlog" and "jobs in the pipeline" when referring to the amount of work that's waiting to be produced. The metaphor works if you think about raw leads going in one end and contracted jobs coming out the other. The transformation seems to happen as if by magic, but in reality, three basic things happen in the pipeline:

- You receive a "lead"—a request for service from a potential client—and decide to pursue it.
- You estimate how much the project will cost to produce and calculate a selling price.
- You present your proposal to the prospect who either accepts or rejects it.

Let's look a little closer at that process and apply some industry-standard numbers to determine how long, on average, it takes to complete each of the three stages.

**1. Develop the lead.** On average, it takes 30 minutes to handle a call from a prospect to your business number. You have to get the customer's basic contact information, find out what kind of project they are interested in, determine their timeline for start and completion, and maybe even discuss price range. If your company isn't the best fit, you have to explain why and refer the caller to someone else.

If it's the kind of work you like to do and it's within the geographical limits of the territory you typically cover, a second set of lead-related activities kicks in, beginning with setting up an appointment to visit the site. Travel to and from your business location averages one hour, and once at the site, there's a lot to be done. You'll listen to the homeowner explain what they want in greater detail, will ask questions, take pictures of the site, and write down or otherwise record information

that will be essential to estimating the job. All of this could take several hours, but let's say you accomplish it all in just one hour. The total thus far to handle the lead is 2½ hours.

**2. Prepare an estimate.** Back in your office, you will likely spend one hour using the photos you took and your notes to create a sketch with all of the details you'll need to create an estimate. The time it takes to estimate costs will vary depending on the scope of work and the methods you use, but the average for the industry is three hours. This is regardless of whether you estimate with unit prices or by counting sticks and bricks, and it also takes into account the need to make and follow up on calls to your suppliers and trade contractors. The total time for this phase is four hours.

**3. Present your proposal and sell the job.** On average, it takes about 2½ hours to prepare a proposal, meet with the homeowners, and reach a buy decision. Add an hour of travel time, and the total for this phase is 3½ hours.

All told, the average total time expended in attempting to transform one lead into one sale is 10 hours.

### WHERE THE TIME GOES

So, how much time will it take to generate \$500,000 in sales? To find out, let's start with close ratio—the number of sales divided by the number of leads. In the remodeling industry, the average is somewhere around 33 percent. Assuming an average job size of \$10,000, some quick math ( $\$500,000 \div 0.33$ ) tells us that you will have to estimate a bit more than \$1.5 million worth of potential work to get \$500,000 of actual

work. That means looking at about 150 jobs to sell 50 of them, which at 10 hours each will require about 1,500 hours of your time.

That amounts to nine months of spending 40 hours each week doing nothing but handling leads, bids, and sales. Add that to the time you have to spend running the rest of the business—which, in addition to actually building out the project, includes scheduling subcontractors, paying the bills, and handling callbacks, to name a few—and it's no wonder that you have to work such long hours when you are the only one in your company.



**The transformation of a lead into a paying job seems to happen as if by magic. The reality is that it takes a lot more work than you think.**

What's the lesson here? First, it doesn't matter what the industry-average numbers are, it matters what *your* numbers are. If you aren't already keeping track of the kind of data I've used in the above example, now would be a good time to start.

As for solving the problem of being overworked, knowing your numbers will help you see where you get maximum return for your time. But it's a complex problem that has many possible solutions. I promise to address some of them in future columns. In the meantime, I would like to hear your thoughts and ideas about good solutions. **PR**

*Les Cunningham is the founder and CEO of Business Networks, a peer review network that groups noncompeting remodeling companies together to work on finding solutions to common business problems. [les@businessnetworks.com](mailto:les@businessnetworks.com)*





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## So Many Energy-Efficiency Certification Programs, So Little Time

**G**reen remodeling has been around for a while, with several options for confirming or certifying a project. The programs that do this include national programs, such as the National Green Building Standard (NGBS) and LEED for Homes, and local and regional programs, including EarthCraft House in the Southeast, GreenStar in the Midwest, and GreenPoint in California, among many others.

There are programs that primarily focus on energy efficiency, such as Home Performance with Energy Star (HPwES), while others, such as HERS (Home Energy Rating System), provide a miles-per-gallon-type report to show a home's level of efficiency. You can have before and after HERS ratings prepared to illustrate for clients the impact of their remodel on home energy efficiency.

When certifying a remodeling project, it's important to find the program that best suits your needs. First, make sure the program certifies the type of remodel you are doing. LEED for Homes only certifies complete gut renovations.

NGBS certifies renovations of any scale, provided they retain the foundation and at least one major structural element. NGBS also certifies small projects such as kitchens, bathrooms, and basements. Most local and regional programs certify typical remodeling and addition projects.

You can search for local programs on the U.S.

Green Building Council's [greenhomeguide.com](http://greenhomeguide.com) website. You may consider working with an energy-efficiency program sponsored by a local utility, most of which offer rebates for homes that complete the certification process. The Database of State Incentives for Renewables & Efficiency has a searchable list of all programs offering rebates and tax incentives.

Each program has specific mandatory requirements, plus additional optional measures that you select from to meet certification. It's important to review mandatory items to confirm that they are included in your scope of work. You'll need to do a preliminary review of your project to make sure that it will meet all requirements before you start the job. Educating the construction team on your program's requirements is key to making it a successful project.

Most programs require that a third-party verifier be used in the certification process to provide assurance for both the contractor and the homeowner that the work is being done properly. Each program defines this person slightly differently: NGBS uses verifiers; HPwES relies on HERS raters; the Building Performance Institute uses building analysts; LEED uses green raters; and local and regional programs turn to technical advisers, raters, or inspectors, each approved to provide certification by the individual programs.

The third party inspects the project and veri-

### MAKING THE PROCESS EASY

**Like voting in Chicago, it's best to work on your certification requirements early and often. Here are some tips for making the process easier.**

- Use the program's checklist when preparing plans.
- Include all documentation requirements in trade contractor and vendor specifications, and make their final payments contingent on providing that documentation.
- Identify requirements that you, as the contractor, must provide, such as owner's manuals, waste recycling documentation, and employee training. Don't wait until the end of the project to collect your documentation since it's too easy to forget about it, move on to the next job, and never finish certification.
- Communicate regularly with your rater and confirm that you haven't missed anything.
- Ask the rater for advice if you're having problems meeting any program requirements. He wants your project certified as much as you do and will do whatever he can to make sure you're successful.



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fies that all work is done according to program requirements. For remodeling jobs, this typically means one inspection before renovation starts, often including blower-door and duct-leak testing; one inspection immediately before drywall is installed to check that insulation, air sealing, HVAC, and all other work is correct; and another inspection at completion to verify materials, appliances, HVAC, and plumbing, and to retest blower door and duct leakage. Successful completion of these inspections, along with providing necessary documentation and paying any required fees, completes the certification process.

## COST IMPLICATIONS

Most green remodeling programs require that fees be paid to the certifying organization, as well as directly to the third-party inspector. NGBS charges \$200 per house for National Association of Home Builders members, and \$500 for non-members. Local program costs run from \$150 to \$450. Inspector fees vary by region and program, typically ranging from \$500 to \$2,000 per home.

Increased construction costs vary, mostly based on upgrades to your standard procedures that may be required. Incorporating green principles from the start, meeting energy and building codes, following all manufacturer's recommended instructions, careful material selection, and following high-quality construction practices will get a project most or all of the way to certification. Trying to make a project "green" after the plan is complete makes the process more challenging and can increase costs. Involving your third-party consultant at the beginning of the design will help you go green more easily and minimize cost increases.

Most programs require accurate HVAC load calculations, high-quality insulation and air sealing, properly installed weather barriers, and other common high-quality building practices.

## WHY CERTIFY?

One of the best reasons to certify your remodeling projects is the value that the third-party

## FIND OUT MORE ...

**Here's a sampling of energy-efficiency certification programs and related resources.**

-----

National Green Building Standard Green Home Remodeling Project Certification provides practices for residential remodeling. A building can be awarded an Emerald, Gold, Silver, or Bronze certification depending on the extent of the green practices used. **homeinnovation.com**

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LEED, or Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design, is a certification program that covers new construction and major renovations. A point system leads to four levels of certification: Certified, Silver, Gold, and Platinum. **usgbc.org/certification**

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Energy Star is an Environmental Protection Agency program that certifies a variety of products as well as residential and commercial structures. **energystar.gov**

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The HERS rating is a numeric system for evaluating a home's efficiency. HERS is overseen by the Residential Energy Services Network (RESNET), an organization that works to help homeowners reduce energy consumption. **hersindex.com**

inspector brings to the process. Contractors are busy and can't be experts in all aspects of a project. Pre-drywall inspections identify issues with insulation, air sealing, moisture management, and HVAC work that can cause problems and cost money down the road. An independent professional helps you get the best out of your trade contractors and can resolve disputes on work quality.

Certifying your green remodeling projects is a great way to improve quality and sustainability in your work. After you've completed a few projects, you'll have a deeper understand-

The Building Performance Institute develops standards for energy-efficiency retrofit work. The organization provides certifications for individuals, contractors, and home energy rating systems. **bpi.org**

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Established by the Greater Atlanta Home Builders Association and Southface, an advocacy organization, EarthCraft is a green building certification program that serves the Southeastern U.S. **earthcraft.org**

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GreenStar, run by the GreenHome Institute, primarily serves the Midwest. **greenhomeinstitute.org**

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Build It Green is a California-based nonprofit with a mission to increase awareness and adoption of green building practices. The organization's rating program is divided into new and existing homes. **builditgreen.org/**

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An easy-to-use database of national and local green certification programs. **greenhomeguide.com/programs**

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The Database of State Incentives for Renewables & Efficiency is a searchable database of all programs offering rebates and tax incentives. **dsireusa.org**

ing of how buildings work. And because your buildings will perform better, your clients will be more satisfied, ultimately leading to more referrals, higher profits, and a better reputation. **PR**

*Carl Seville is a consultant, educator, and speaker on sustainability for the residential construction industry. His firm, SK Collaborative, consults on and provides green certification for single- and multi-family buildings. **skcollaborative.com***





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<sup>1</sup> Based on a comparison of the *Automotive News* classification of full-size commercial vans at time of print. <sup>2</sup> Fuel savings estimate of up to 18% according to FTP75 testing of engine OM651 (4-Cylinder) versus MY13 OM642 (V6). Individual mileage will vary, based on factors including vehicle load, driving style, road conditions and fuel quality. <sup>3</sup> Crosswind Assist engages automatically when sensing dangerous wind gusts at highway speeds exceeding 50 mph. Performance is limited by wind severity and available traction, which snow, ice, and other conditions can affect. Always drive carefully, consistent with conditions. Feature not available on 3500 models.

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# INTELLIGENT INTEGRATION

*The 2015 Design Awards open with our stunning Project of the Year. This deceptively simple kitchen remodel had to seamlessly integrate multiple updates and styles*

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By Susan Bady, Senior Contributing Editor

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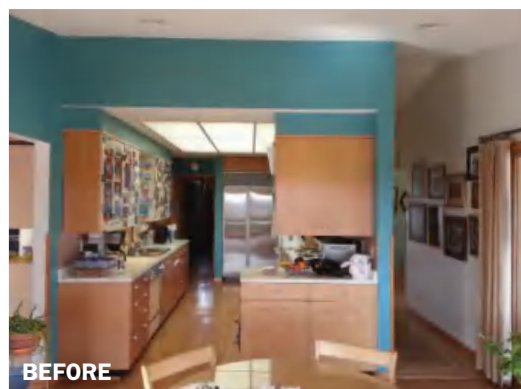
The owners of this mid-century modern home in Johnston, Iowa, had been planning to remodel the kitchen for seven years, but that project took a back seat to multiple other renovations. When it was finally time to start on the kitchen, they recognized that it had to tie together all of the previous projects. A number of rooms adjacent to the kitchen were poorly connected either visually or functionally, and the clients wanted the new kitchen to incorporate these areas in a way that would facilitate entertaining and daily living for a family of five.

"The original house was built in 1966 and had a strong modern aesthetic, which the clients wanted to respect while creating something more contemporary," says Chaden Halfhill, owner of Silent Rivers Design + Build, in Clive, Iowa. "As walls were taken down or put up, views to and from the kitchen had to be considered from many different vantage points to make sure that the new space accomplished its goal of integrating the whole house."

Silent Rivers designer Tyson Leyendecker removed the walls around the original kitchen to visually better connect it to the rest of the main floor and draw more natural light throughout the core of the home. Leyendecker

opened the wall between the kitchen and an original playroom and created bar seating in its place. He also removed exterior walls to incorporate a screened porch into the conditioned living space.

A 650-gallon saltwater aquarium was installed in the location of a former closet, adding a load of more than 6,000 pounds.



*Mixing new, naturally finished birch trim and cabinetry with birch trim and cabinetry that was finished as much as 48 years ago can be challenging, notes the remodeler. "For this reason, we tried to avoid any connections between the two surfaces in the same plane and at times with the same profile," says Chaden Halfhill of Silent Rivers Design + Build. "We also used dissimilar materials to create intersections and transitions to lock details together."*



*One of the new kitchen's unique features is a magnetic cabinet surface near the sink that looks like birch cabinetry.*

"Because we added the structural framing needed to carry the new load during a previous project, none of the finished space below the aquarium was impacted," Halfhill says. The aquarium is visible from any point in and around the kitchen.

There was an existing loft in an adjacent playroom that is accessed by a ship's ladder. As part of the remodel, the function of that playroom changed to include seating and a music area, and the ship's ladder was removed. "In its place we built a cantilevered, wall-mounted ladder out of natural birch and stainless steel and created a hatch opening in the loft floor so the children can still access the loft," he says. "We also opened a window so the kids can look down into the kitchen from the loft."

There are as many as five different seating areas around the kitchen, plus the food prep area, creating options for congregating and socializing.

The clients wanted to have a television somewhere in the space. Rather than mounting the TV on a wall with



*(far left) A birch butcher-block bar top waterfalls over the edge of the quartz countertop.*

*(above) Electrical outlets pop up out of the island countertop.*

*(left) The remodeler kept the original window into a previous storage room to allow natural light to filter into the new laundry room.*

an articulating arm, Silent Rivers placed it in the island on a lift that can rotate 180 degrees in either direction. When not in use, the TV can be hidden away inside the island.

In addition, the clients asked for a magnetic surface to display items. “By reusing their existing steel cabinets in the new walk-in pantry, we were able to accommodate their request,” Halfhill

says. The company also reused the mixer cabinet from the original kitchen, after giving the door a new coat of paint.

The stone ballasted roof was removed and replaced with a standing-seam metal roof, which lightened the roof load and eliminated the need for additional structural beams and columns. This allowed the ceiling plane to remain smooth and disguised the transition from new to old.

By adding more windows and pushing walls out, Silent Rivers was able to improve views and connections to the exterior spaces around the house. “The clients are extremely happy with their kitchen remodel,” Halfhill says. “They now spend more time together in and near the kitchen, and they entertain more frequently.”

The judges were nearly as enthusiastic about the remodel as the clients. “Every so often you run across a project that is so magnificently detailed, so artfully engineered, so masterfully executed, that you are captivated by every facet of the work,” they said. “It manages to imbue incredible life in the simplest and cleanest of lines—a near impossible feat.” **PR**

## KEY PRODUCTS

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## HISTORIC RENOVATION

**Davitt Design Build**

**West Kingston, R.I.**

## SEASIDE SENSATION

**PROJECT GOALS:** Built in 1868, Idlewild is a 1½ story, mansard-roofed dwelling located in a New England seaside town. The residence features a Tuscan-columned veranda and round-head dormer windows, as well as a guest house. The new owners wished to revitalize the home, preserving its historical character while updating it to meet the needs of their family, which includes two adult sons and a 13-year-old daughter.

**CHALLENGES:** Since Idlewild is in a hurricane zone, tie-downs had to be incorporated. Spray-foam insulation was used to bring the house up to energy-code requirements. All loads were brought to concrete footings, and HVAC ductwork was hidden in columns and closets.

**SOLUTIONS:** Davitt Design Build transformed the 3,996-square-foot home by removing interior walls to create larger open spaces. New kitchen areas facilitate food preparation and entertaining while a new outdoor kitchen expands entertaining space.



NAT REA PHOTOGRAPHY

A variety of textures such as hardwood, wainscoting, soapstone, and marble help connect to the home's past. Original materials were used whenever possible. For example, the front door, the center hallway staircase rail, the original fir flooring, and the exterior shutters were restored.

**WHAT THE JUDGES SAID:** "Every detail was accounted for in the historical restoration. No corner went untouched. The level of difficulty for a project like this must have been enormous, but [the remodeling team] completely nailed it."



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## CROSS-GABLE CONNECTION

**CHALLENGES:** Abandoned for seven years, the church was ravaged by neglect, water infiltration, and termites. The interior plaster was crumbling, the wood floors were unsalvageable, and there was lead paint, asbestos, and mold throughout.

**SOLUTIONS:** Toxins were removed in accordance with state and federal regulations. The heavy timber sill plates and the bottom portions of the wood studs were then substantially reframed.

An addition was built with a cruciform (crossed gable) plan that has transepts connecting the old to the new.

At the cross gables of the addition, an 8-foot-diameter glass dome allows for natural daylighting into the center of the new design-studio space.

The exterior façade was finished with painted mahogany Dutch lap siding to replicate the original structure. Exposed portions of the foundation walls are covered with a natural stone veneer to match the original dry-set stone foundations.

The roof is constructed of SIPs panels and covered by a gray composite slate, with copper flashings and snow guards.

The casement-style windows are custom-designed aluminum-clad wood, with gothic-arch fixed grilles. The church is now an interior design studio.

**WHAT THE JUDGES SAID:** “I was blown away by the tremendous undertaking of this exquisite remodel. Tasteful and artful design transforms the space into a powerful statement on line, texture, color, and rhythm.”



### COMMERCIAL REMODEL

**Homewood Properties, Clarksville, Md.**

**Architect/interior designer: Lehman Associates**



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**KITCHEN \$50,000 TO \$100,000**

**The Wiese Co., Sherborn, Mass.**

## OPEN INVITATION

**PROJECT GOALS:** The view from this kitchen into the living room was obstructed by a large refrigerator and wall. The clients wanted to open up the space and create a modern, warm kitchen with more pantry storage and seating.

**CHALLENGES:** The removed wall was load-bearing, so the beams had to be beefed up to support the new opening. Without a good stopping or starting point to fir it out, the solution had to live well in the space without shrinking the kitchen.

**SOLUTIONS:** The answer was to encase the beam and posts with wood to create a modern architectural feature that would define the large opening to the kitchen and integrate it with the living area.

The remodeler removed the wall between the kitchen and living room, making the kitchen island more functional for seating, storage and food preparation. A 2¼-inch-thick walnut counter visually separates the food prep and seating areas. The walnut joins the floor with a waterfall edge that grounds the island and supports the rest of the counter.

The existing desk area was replaced with larger pantry cabinets made of cherry to add a warm, embracing backdrop. The rest of the cabinets and the island are white to maintain balance and brightness. A dimensional tile in subtle, warm gray tones adds texture and interest.

**WHAT THE JUDGES SAID:** “I’m amazed at how high this kitchen feels. From layout, material selection, and overall feel, this is an amazing job for the budget.”



DAN CALLAHAN





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# ALFRESCO ATTRACTION

**PROJECT GOALS:** The clients wanted a series of outdoor spaces that could be used for everything from family gatherings to charity events.

**SOLUTIONS:** Working around the existing centralized pool, the remodeler added a new outdoor kitchen with a custom stainless steel refrigerator and cabinets that completely seal when closed, so the kitchen can be kept fully stocked at all times.

The existing pool cabana was renovated to create a comfortable sitting area with TV viewing beside the hot tub and pool, as well as a new bathroom, laundry room, and changing area. The remodeler also created a new garden on the basement roof, utilizing green-roof techniques and decorative potting.

Solid slabs of granite provide a countertop that can stand up to the environment. The same granite and stainless steel is used around the grill's cooking area so that the home's natural limestone won't stain.

A custom lower table creates a unique seating/serving area alongside the elevated counter, while a covered eating area next to the outdoor kitchen and adjacent to the main house allows natural light in with "solar cool" tinted glass. Cable lighting strung along the glass gives it an appealing nighttime ambiance.

**WHAT THE JUDGES SAID:** "A great demonstration of extending indoor living to the outside. The warm blend of finishes really brings this outdoor space to life."



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**WHOLE-HOUSE OVER \$750,000**

**Laughlin Homes & Restoration, Fredericksburg, Texas**

## SALTBOX TRANSFORMATION

**PROJECT GOALS:** To convert a cramped 1970s saltbox into an inviting space suitable for entertaining, while honoring the original building.

**SOLUTIONS:** Additions were designed to blend with, rather than overpower, the surrounding historic neighborhood. The remodeled home sports a distinctive modern vernacular design.

The raised, stone-clad pool offers additional seating for entertaining. Historically styled stone walls provide privacy and mute traffic noise, while creating a layering effect from the street that gives the home depth and interest.

The gourmet kitchen was designed around locally acquired historical apothecary casework.

The stairwell is flooded with natural light, giving it the feel of an outdoor space. A local blacksmith designed and forged cast iron and hand-wrought steel into a beautiful and functional railing. Discarded 1-by-1-inch weathered oak slats were used for the interior pine wall siding.

The master suite features a large walk-in closet, an elegant bath, and a sleeping area with a balcony that overlooks the spa and pool. The clients' teenage daughters each have their own bedroom suites. The use of reclaimed materials includes handmade brick, the iron for



BLAKE MISTICH PHOTOGRAPHER

the balcony railing, lumber, and lighting fixtures. A quirky, yet stylish, aesthetic played a key role. For example, the fixtures over the dining-room table are repurposed tornado sirens that were assembled on site.

**WHAT THE JUDGES SAID:** "A spectacular example of adaptive reuse from the amazing wall in the grand stair to the open-concept kitchen to the extension of living space to the exterior. Everything about this house says Old World charm, with modern living in mind."





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**WHOLE-HOUSE \$300,000 TO \$750,000**

**Deslandes Contracting, St. Petersburg, Fla.**

**Architect: Roney Design Group**

## BEGUILING BEACH HOME

**PROJECT GOALS:** To completely remodel a 1973 Florida residence into a contemporary beach house.

**CHALLENGES:** The home is located on a 50-by-175-foot-deep lot with front access on the main beach roadway. No street parking is available. The rear balcony was in need of structural repair due to settling and deflection.

**SOLUTIONS:** The pitched roofs were eliminated and parapet walls introduced, along with large flat roof overhangs with industrial cable supports. Ipe horizontal siding, in conjunction with new sand-finish stucco and stainless steel hardware, was added to enhance the front and rear façades. A motor court was developed with large, square concrete-pad pavers, separated by 6-inch strips of artificial turf.

Numerous small wood columns supporting the rear balcony were replaced with three columns and a large beam.

Landscape planters and an extensive patio drainage system were added, and the pool itself was completely renovated with a new heated spa and sun shelf.



EVERETT & SOULE

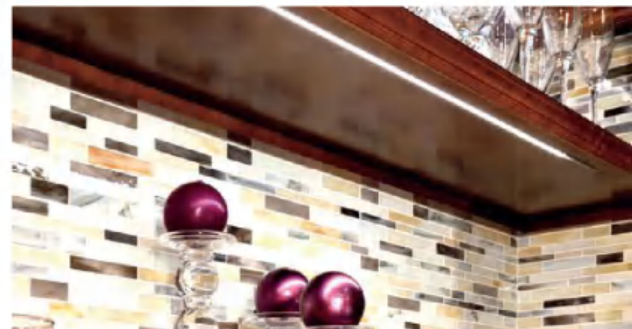
The home now has an open, functional floor plan that facilitates entertaining, with easy access to the pool deck and beach.

**WHAT THE JUDGES SAID:** "The real attention to detail regarding the approach to the front door, and the flow through the home as well as the spectacular ending point of the back pool/patio area ... breathtaking!"





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## HIGH LIGHT

**PROJECT GOALS:** A total makeover of a tired, worn 1960s ranch that would redefine its spaces and appearance and take advantage of the backyard views and natural light.

**CHALLENGES:** Old bushes obscured the front, where the most distinctive features were a prominent garage door and two false, over-framed gables. The roof over the living room was sagging, and the room itself was tight and isolated from the rest of the house.

At one end of the home was a cheaply built sun porch that blocked the small family room from views. The kitchen was dark, dated, and closed off from the living and family rooms.

**SOLUTIONS:** The failing section of the roof was cut away and a belvedere now floats above the main ridge. The old living room is now a great room distinguished by the belvedere, which brings in daylight from all four sides.



PHILIP WEGENER



### WHOLE-HOUSE UNDER \$300,000

Colorado Sunroom & Window, Denver

Architect: Doug Walter, Godden | Sudik Architects

The wall separating the kitchen and front entry was removed to give the home a contemporary, loft-like flow. Two south-facing skylights flood the new kitchen with daylight. Another wall was removed to create an open breakfast bar.

A 12-foot sliding door opens to a new rear patio that overlooks a nearby lake. The sun porch and tiny family room were replaced by a master suite.

**WHAT THE JUDGES SAID:** “Who would have thought this was an old, dated ranch home? By bringing more height into the living space, this once-tired ranch becomes a creative example of mid-century revival. The added exterior volume makes the home look more interesting while adding much-needed light to the interior.”



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## RESIDENTIAL INTERIOR OVER \$100,000

**Tier1 Group, Leander, Texas**

**Interior designer: Robin Bond Interiors**

## BE OUR GUEST

**PROJECT GOALS:** Create a more open living space for entertaining in a high-rise condominium with views of the Austin skyline. Use color to accentuate artwork and furnishings. Completely renovate the home's 3½ bathrooms.

**SOLUTIONS:** Tier1 Group created a more cohesive flow by removing the dropped ceiling, walls, and elevated bar tops in the living area. They installed a custom-built kitchen island with one continuous level surface that increased the amount of food-preparation space and removed barriers to views. Glass-front cabinets and warm paint colors were used in the kitchen along with LED lighting in the ceiling and under and above the counters.

The entertaining areas are defined by custom cabinets, a floating bar top, LED ceiling and undercounter lighting, an undercounter refrigerator and wine cooler, and an entertainment center with a large, flat-screen TV.

Decorative lighting and suspended LED fixtures and sconces illuminate each room. New tile flooring was installed in the primary living areas.



TWIST TOURS

Bathtubs were converted to walk-in showers, and such features as floating cabinetry, towel warmers, vessel or drop-in sinks, and LED lighting were installed. New tile and paint give each bath a unique and inviting atmosphere.

**WHAT THE JUDGES SAID:** "This condo was certainly past its prime. After some creative design and tasteful material selection, a fresh, inviting space was realized."



# EASY AS



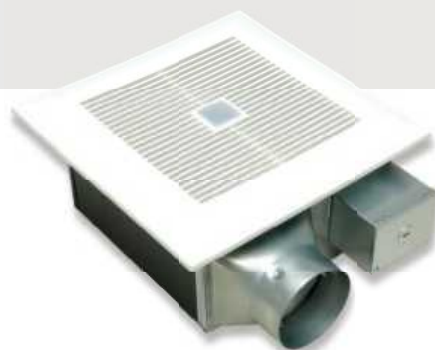
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## WONDER WALL

**PROJECT GOALS:** Redesign and remodel a living room for clients who travel and entertain frequently. Their requirements included an integrated, 70-inch, flat-screen TV, a fireplace, built-in storage for at least 450 bottles of wine, and secondary seating for four to six guests.

**CHALLENGES:** The clients wanted to keep the existing firebox, which made the redesign of the fireplace wall a challenge, as it was off center. Also, the layout of the entry and the hall that leads to the bedrooms and garage felt awkward.

**SOLUTIONS:** The remodeler created a fireplace feature wall that visitors see as soon as they enter the home. An arched doorway to the entry was added to give it a more formal look and widen the new wine room.

Three depths of curves break up the monotony of straight lines in the room and soften the visual impact of the large fireplace wall. The long stone hearth grounds the wall and functions as secondary seating. The clients can enjoy mountain views from a larger curved area of the hearth near the window.

The main curved wall is finished with a hand-troweled, five-layer American Clay plaster, with American Schist stacked stone below and Autumn Blend flagstone at the hearth. LED lighting subtly accents the wall and stone textures at night. The clients can store more than 800 bottles in their new wine room.

**WHAT THE JUDGES SAID:** “This project is a great example of bringing an existing space that is tired and outdated up to speed, while still allowing it to function the way it was intended—only better. The added wine room is not only functional for an avid wine lover, but also creates a cool focal point in the room.”



DINO TONN PHOTOGRAPHY (LIVING ROOM)/JOHN WOODCOCK PHOTOGRAPHY (WINE ROOM)

### RESIDENTIAL INTERIOR UNDER \$100,000

Beautiful Remodel, Gilbert, Ariz.





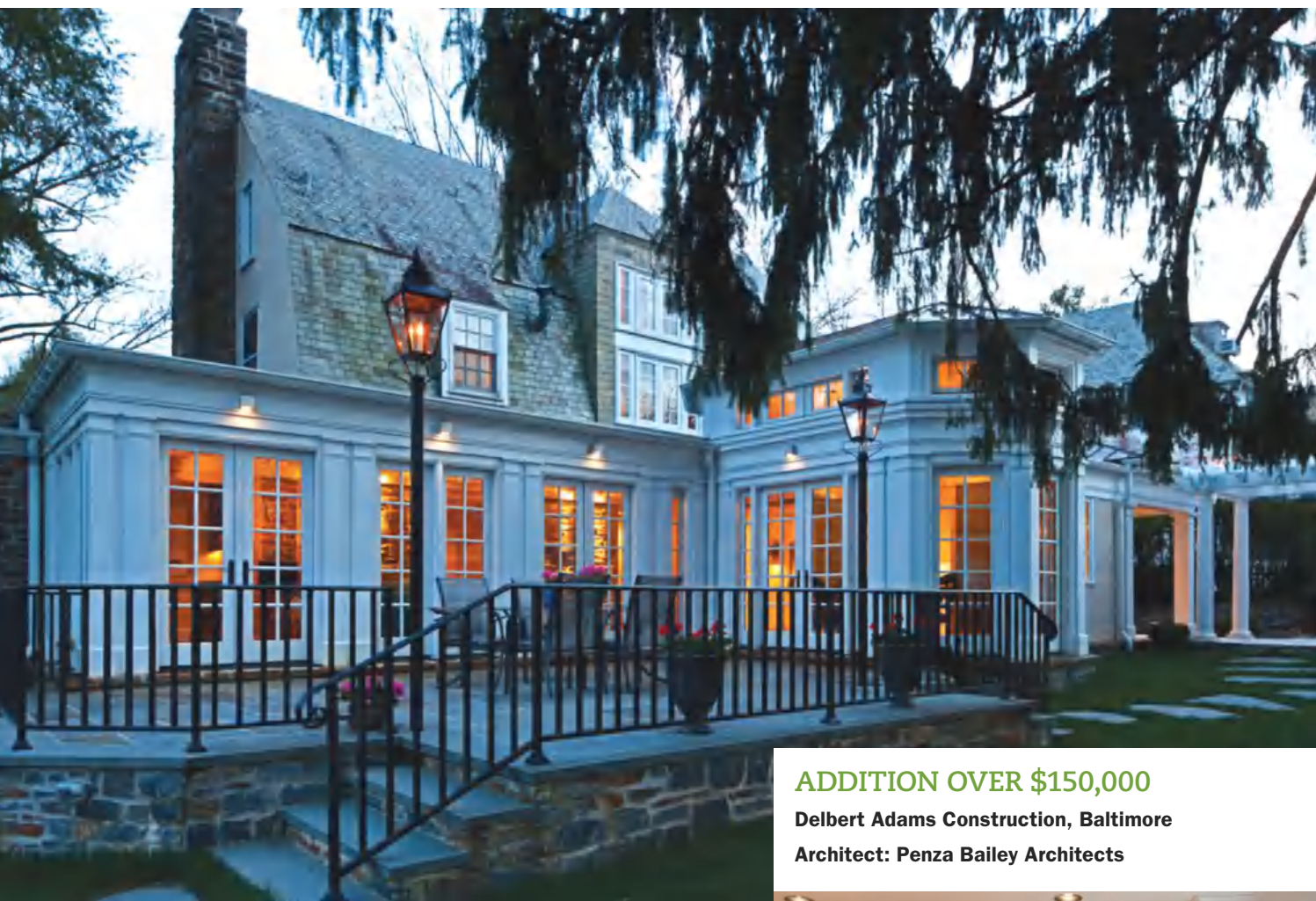


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### ADDITION OVER \$150,000

**Delbert Adams Construction, Baltimore**

**Architect: Penza Bailey Architects**

## PERFECT MATCH

**PROJECT GOALS:** Significantly enlarge the kitchen of an 80-year-old Dutch colonial, enabling the clients to entertain large numbers of guests.

**CHALLENGES:** Connecting the addition to the gambrel-roofed, stone-and-stucco home. The ceilings all had to be maintained as well as the eaves line of the existing house.

**SOLUTIONS:** Create a gallery addition across the rear, anchored at one end by a new kitchen addition. The gallery flows gracefully out to a new bluestone terrace via French doors, while a coffered ceiling gives detail and rhythm to the fairly narrow gallery space. Existing windows and doors are now wider and open to the gallery. The stone repairs match the original house so well that they're invisible.

**WHAT THE JUDGES SAID:** "This is a skillful addition that masterfully combines the new with the old. The obvious detailed flourishes are tasteful and well executed, but it's the integration of old and new that really makes this project sing."



ANNE GUMMERSON PHOTOGRAPHY





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## FAMILY FRIENDLY

**PROJECT GOALS:** As their family grew, the owners of this colonial revival cottage required more living space than their 70-year-old home could provide.

**CHALLENGES:** The clients wanted to install custom inset cabinets, but the cost was a concern. The existing aluminum siding and trim concealed original millwork and shingles that, when exposed, proved to be in poor condition.

**SOLUTIONS:** After researching several options, the clients found that it was just as cost-effective to use the local cabinetmaker. This also allowed for more precise detailing and the inclusion of unique features.

The original siding and trim was either repaired or replaced, creating a seamless exterior appearance.

The kitchen was gutted, expanded, and opened up to a family room and nook area at the rear of the home. The family room opens to a screened porch that takes advantage of a previously unused side yard.

The result is a classical farmhouse kitchen updated with modern features. The much-needed new rear entrance gives the family space for a laundry room and is now the primary entry point from the detached garage.

**WHAT THE JUDGES SAID:** “This project has such charm. The kitchen layout is perfect, with great flow. The coffered ceiling adds huge impact to the room.”



AMANDA FOX/CBI DESIGN PROFESSIONALS

### ADDITION UNDER \$150,000

**Kramer Building Co., Troy, Mich.**

**Architect: CBI Design Professionals**

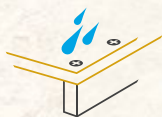




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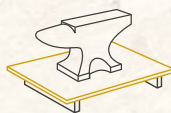
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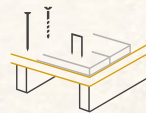
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### KITCHEN OVER \$100,000

Biron Homes & Design, St. Charles, Ill.

Architect: Charles Vincent George Architects

## KITCHEN TRANSITION

**PROJECT GOALS:** Update a 1990s kitchen and rework the traffic pattern to accommodate large gatherings.

**CHALLENGES:** The orchestration and installation of the cabinetry, millwork, and trim was the most difficult task.

**SOLUTIONS:** The kerf detail that runs seamlessly around the entire island was carried through to the drawer and door fronts; TV/pantry cabinets; and banquette face.

The pantry, broom closet, and two walls at the basement stairs were removed. The opening to the kitchen area was enlarged, and the doorway from the kitchen to the dining room was moved farther down the wall.

To meet the client's storage, TV, and seating requirements, the remodeler wrapped continuous cabinetry from the dinette to the pantries and the interconnected walls. To facilitate large gatherings, there are two dishwashers, pull-out trash bins, two refrigerators, a warming drawer, and



TIM BENSON PHOTOGRAPHY

a run of base cabinets designed to store serving trays.

Lighted, open, curved display shelves behind the banquette highlight the client's china collection.

**WHAT THE JUDGES SAID:** "I loved the material selections. The creative application of a banquette with the built-in storage behind [is] one of my favorite details of the space. I also love the way the warm floor plays off the beamed ceiling."





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## BATH OVER \$60,000

**Interior designer:** Arch-Interiors Design Group  
Beverly Hills, Calif.



GREG WEINER

## BATHING BEAUTY

**PROJECT GOALS:** The master bathroom of this mid-century modern home was beyond outdated for the clients' needs. The goal was to create one, open area.

**CHALLENGES:** The bath was extremely compartmentalized with closets in the vanity area and a tub, shower, and toilet in an adjacent, enclosed space.

**SOLUTIONS:** To make the bath function and feel symmetrical, a whirlpool tub with a dramatic, waterfall tub filler was placed at the center of the space. The tub surface extends into the shower to create a bench.

The clients favored a crisp, elegant, white look, though not pure white. Calacutta marble was the perfect answer since the veining in the stone added visual interest. The glass-enclosed shower doesn't have a threshold, which gives it a more modern feel, and the drain is hidden. The water closet is enclosed in frosted glass for privacy.

Wall-mounted, his-and-hers vanities have an espresso finish topped with white Caesarstone, with an oversize counter edge detail. The glass door leading into the bedroom slides open on barn-door hardware. Motorized window shades provide privacy when needed.

**WHAT THE JUDGES SAID:** "Spacious and bright with impeccable craftsmanship and detail, such as the continuous grain up the tub skirt to the floating shower seat."





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## STYLED IN STONE

**PROJECT GOALS:** Update the bathroom of a 25-year-old colonial. The clients wanted a large walk-in shower with no threshold, better lighting, and more storage, allowing them to age in place. They also wanted the bath to have a bit of an outdoor feel.

**SOLUTIONS:** Borrowing space from an adjacent closet, the remodeler enlarged the existing shower stall, building up and waterproofing the bathroom floor to make the shower level with the rest of the room. The bath was widened to enlarge the commode area, which now has a frosted-glass pocket door and built-in storage space. Incorporating stacked stone and river rock gave the room the desired outdoor ambience.

Stacked stone covers the feature wall surrounding the free-standing tub and back wall of the toilet. Recessed and hanging shelves have low-voltage backlighting. A heavy, floor-to-ceiling glass panel open to the tub area on one side encloses the shower, which has upgraded fixtures.

French doors, matched to the vanity, let in natural light. The

vanity features a rare granite-slab countertop, vessel sinks, and a river-rock backsplash. Linear niches and pendant lights complete the contemporary look.

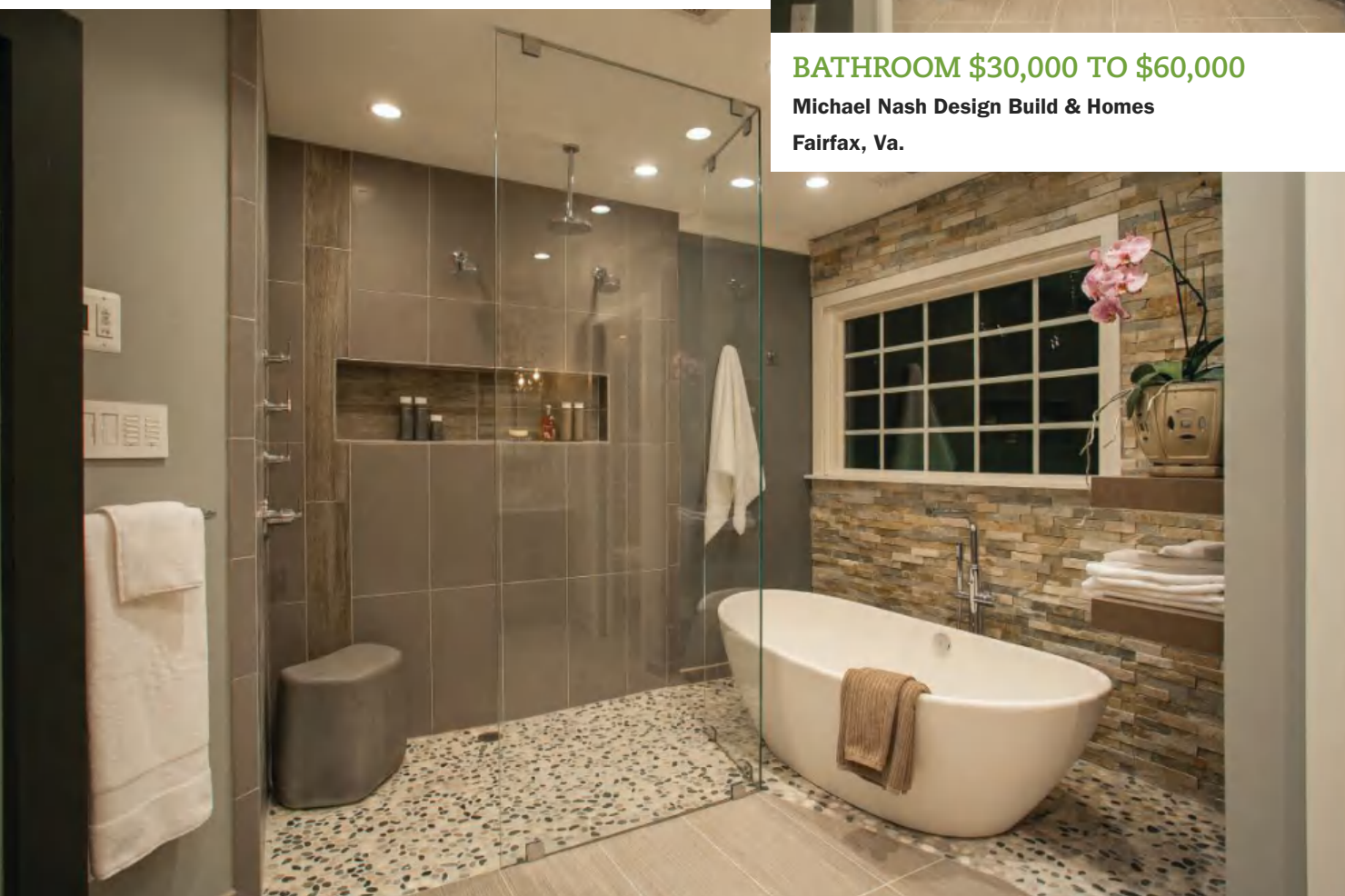
**WHAT THE JUDGES SAID:** “Great use of different textures and a combination of colors.”



### BATHROOM \$30,000 TO \$60,000

Michael Nash Design Build & Homes

Fairfax, Va.







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Maspeth, N.Y.



ANTHONY DEPRIMO

## PARTY PAD

**PROJECT GOALS:** Convert the studio apartment on the second floor of the clients' duplex into a space for entertaining and guests.

**CHALLENGES:** The cabinet manufacturer had to fly to the U.S. from Europe to take detailed, precise measurements of all walls, ceiling heights, and window and door openings to create the shop drawings. All millwork was custom-made in England, so there was no room for error. Another issue was that the neighbor living below complained of always hearing footsteps in the apartment.

**SOLUTIONS:** The studio's small kitchen was turned into a walk-in closet, while the main room remained the living room and the bedroom alcove became a library. The entire apartment was rewired with new electrical for outlets, wall sconces, a center chandelier, and recessed lighting. Each light location is controlled by its own dimmer for energy efficiency. A soundproof mat with two layers of plywood was installed prior to the installation of the carpet to rectify the issue of sound transmission to the apartment below.

In the end, the two-tone wood combination of tiger birch and mahogany gives definition and shows the depth of layering. All fixtures are gold plated, from the chandelier to the recessed-light trim. Even the custom screw-less plate covers are gold. Custom millwork disguises the radiators; the front panels are removable for servicing.

**WHAT THE JUDGES SAID:** "This is Old World style and quality work virtually never seen anymore. The materials—tiger birch and mahogany—are rich and opulent. The meticulous process—handcrafted in England and shipped pre-cut—demonstrates detail and precision of the highest degree."



## FINISHED BASEMENT

AMEK Custom Builders, Bloomington, Minn.

Architect: Firm Two Architecture

## GAME ON

**PROJECT GOALS:** The clients wanted an upscale “entertainment parlor” for watching movies, relaxing with friends, and gathering for family game night.

**CHALLENGES:** The curved staircase and new stair landing posed challenges in balancing design aesthetics with local code requirements. Turning the landing so it faces into the main area rather than a back hall forced load-bearing portions to be moved and modified.

The ceiling over the game area required extra skill. Carpenters and electricians had to cut holes for wiring through the 4-inch-thick fir beams as well as scribe the beams to the curved soffit. Each stair step was hand-crafted with custom-cut treads, and the underside of each step individually drywalled.

**SOLUTIONS:** The main area is divided into a stonework theater, a custom bar, and a gaming table. The game area was given its own personality with solid Douglas fir ceiling beams, stone wall pillars, and tile flooring. A fitness room, guest bedroom, and bathroom with



LANDMARK PHOTOGRAPHY & DESIGN

a walk-in shower are also part of the project. One special feature is a kid-size hideaway under the curved steps. Artwork is featured along the stair wall in small openings with recessed lighting.

A home control system regulates room temperature, in-floor heat, accent lighting, and all electronics. All mechanicals were relocated in the curved walls and ceiling soffits.

**WHAT THE JUDGES SAID:** “A very clever design ... this is a great example of extending the living space to feel more like the ‘lower level,’ not the negative stigma that sometimes comes with a basement.”



## RESTORED TO GLORY

**PROJECT GOALS:** Execute a historically accurate restoration of the former Lansing Depot for the Grand Trunk Railroad REO Town stop. Remodel the interior as a corporate meeting place for the Lansing Board of Water & Light.



**CHALLENGES:** The Tudor Revival masonry building had been extensively remodeled and many historical features destroyed or covered. The last occupant, a restaurant, left a leaking roof and broken windows. Water damage had created a structurally deficient floor system that needed to be replaced.

**SOLUTION:** The interior was restored based on old photos, and a new, but authentic, tile roof was installed. Exterior brick and stone work was repaired and restored, and new replica windows were put in place. Updated technology, power, HVAC, and plumbing systems were installed. In addition, many energy-saving and sustainable design features were incorporated including LED lighting, Energy Star HVAC equipment, new insulation, and recycled tile and carpet.

**WHAT THE JUDGES SAID:** “There is nothing quite like seeing a structure brought back to life and, in this case, surpassing its former glory. To look at the before photos—crumbling mortar, plaster-caked brick, deteriorating wood—one gets a true sense of the magnitude of this remarkable restoration.”

### HISTORIC RENOVATION

**Kramer Management Group/Christman Construction/  
Granger, Lansing, Mich.**

**Architect/interior designer: Cornerstone Architects**







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## EXTERIOR

**Biron Homes & Design, St. Charles, Ill.**

**Architect: Charles Vincent George**

**Architects**

## REJUVENATED TUDOR

**PROJECT GOALS:** The owners wanted to upgrade the façade, yet keep the Old World charm and whimsical style of this 1929 Tudor. The home had no porch or overhang at the front entry, and it lacked a large receiving area.

**CHALLENGES:** The home's footprint was narrow at the front elevation and was built into a hill, preventing passersby from appreciating the size of the property.

**SOLUTIONS:** Wing walls were added to widen the exterior façade to the lot lines, and a bluestone courtyard with masonry walls was incorporated off the front entry. An automated gate, wrapped in mahogany, was added at the driveway, and a similar swing gate was added at the stone wall leading to the side yard. Custom faux copper patina light fixtures, which match the copper gutters, were fabricated for the stone wing walls and the side gate.

A porch with a bluestone floor and steps was built with a balcony above. The upper and lower ceilings are fir beadboard with cedar box beams, embellished with decorative custom metal brackets.

The 3-foot opening leading to the front-hall foyer was opened up to seven-plus feet. A new archway follows the existing plastered ceiling—also arched—making the porch look as if it had always been there.

**WHAT THE JUDGES SAID:** “The execution [of] making the house feel [grand], yet [choosing] appropriate materials and geometry, really made me feel like this was a special way to enter the home. The flared retaining walls at either side ... help make it feel larger than it is.”



TIM BENSON PHOTOGRAPHY



## CARRIAGE TRADE

**PROJECT GOALS:** Build a separate carriage house to protect vehicles from harsh New England winters.

**CHALLENGES:** The ideal spot for the carriage house was along the edge of the existing driveway, which slopes up while the side yard slopes down. The remodeler had to build into the side of a hill. Given the wetlands setbacks, the location of the well, and the existing sports court, the structure had to be compact, which meant a single garage door and front-to-back parking for two vehicles. It also

had to meet building codes regarding the storage of vehicles on a non-combustible surface, and the new structure had to fit in with the main house.

**SOLUTIONS:** To add a third parking spot, a bay was created underneath the main floor with access from the side. The front foundation wall was dug 4 feet deep to minimize the over-dig. The foundation was stepped down to accommodate the side walls and stepped down again so that it is 4 feet below the lower-bay garage door. A slot was poured for a set of stairs from the upper to the lower level. The wood-floor framing upstairs was dropped and a fiberglass-reinforced thin slab poured to serve as a ceiling for the lower bay.

Board-and-batten siding painted the same color as the house provides both connection and separation. Strong vertical shadow lines give the building some rustic stature and complement the stone veneer on the front wall. The gable roof is adorned with two dormers that match the main house and a cupola that adheres to the ridgeline ratio. Concrete pavers create an undulating apron that meets the sloped driveway and the level garage slab.

**WHAT THE JUDGES SAID:** “Adding a structure of this size without it becoming an overbearing element on the site is no easy feat. This project is incredibly tasteful and well executed. The complexity is expertly hidden.”



GREG PREMUR PHOTOGRAPHY

## DETACHED OUTBUILDING

**Remodeler/designer:** Platt Builders, Groton, Mass.





## COMMERCIAL REMODEL

**Denco Dental Construction, Tempe, Ariz.**

**Architect: Line Werks Architecture**

**Interior designer: Norma Rodriguez Ruesga**

## DYNAMIC DENTISTRY

**PROJECT GOALS:** Convert a 10,000-square-foot clothing/apparel store into an 8,000-square-foot pediatric dental office and a 2,000-square-foot prosthodontics office. The husband-and-wife clients wanted to share a common panoramic X-ray area, employee break room, and business offices.

**CHALLENGES:** There were strict limitations on working hours due to tenants living above the space that was being remodeled. Street deliveries were also limited to between 7 and 9 a.m. due to access issues. Because the plans were created by an architectural and design team in Mexico, they had metric measurements and building codes that had to be converted to local requirements.

**SOLUTIONS:** The pediatric part of the suite was given an “outer space” theme with specialty design elements created and installed by a large Canadian company.

Thanks to the retrofit, the clients were able to stay in the same part of town while enlarging their office space. They also expanded their client base by creating a fun-filled, interactive children’s dental office.

**WHAT THE JUDGES SAID:** “One of the most unique designs [we’ve] ever seen. Conceptually, it’s amazing, and the execution is even better.”



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### WHOLE-HOUSE OVER \$750,000

CBI Design Professionals, Bloomfield Hills, Mich.

### RESIDENTIAL INTERIOR OVER \$100,000

Lester Development, Aspen, Colo.

### KITCHEN OVER \$100,000

Platt Builders, Groton, Mass.

### BATHROOM OVER \$60,000

Alure Home Improvements, East Meadow, N.Y.

### BATHROOM \$30,000 TO \$60,000

J.S. Brown & Co., Columbus, Ohio

### BATHROOM UNDER \$30,000

Finished Basement Co., St. Louis Park, Minn.

### RESIDENTIAL SPECIALTY

Mike Schaap Builders, Holland, Mich.

### FINISHED BASEMENT

Creative Design Construction, Northvale, N.J.

### HISTORIC RENOVATION

Allen Construction, Santa Barbara, Calif.

### OUTDOOR LIVING OVER \$100,000

Company: Corinthian Fine Homes, Indianapolis

### EXTERIOR

Marrokal Design & Remodeling, San Diego

### DETACHED OUTBUILDING

Kohlmark Group, Burke, Va.

### COMMERCIAL REMODEL

PURE Design Environments, Bloomington, Minn.

## BRONZE

### WHOLE-HOUSE OVER \$750,000

Wydeven Architects, Milwaukee

### WHOLE-HOUSE \$300,000 TO \$750,000

Cape Associates, Eastham, Mass.

### RESIDENTIAL INTERIOR OVER \$100,000

European Cabinets & Design Studios, Palo Alto, Calif.

### RESIDENTIAL INTERIOR UNDER \$100,000

Platt Builders, Groton, Mass.

### ADDITION OVER \$150,000

Marrokal Design & Remodeling, San Diego

### KITCHEN OVER \$100,000

Silent Rivers Design + Build, Clive, Iowa

### KITCHEN \$50,000 TO \$100,000

Marrokal Design & Remodeling, San Diego

### BATHROOM \$30,000 TO \$60,000

Michael Nash Design Build & Homes, Fairfax, Va.

### BATHROOM UNDER \$30,000

TriplePoint Design Build, St. Petersburg, Fla.

### FINISHED BASEMENT

Normandy Remodeling, Hinsdale, Ill.

### HISTORIC RENOVATION

Meadowlark Builders, Ann Arbor, Mich.

### OUTDOOR LIVING OVER \$100,000

T.R. Builder, Newport News, Va.

### OUTDOOR LIVING UNDER \$100,000

Hinman Construction, Ballston Spa, N.Y.

### EXTERIOR

Marrokal Design & Remodeling, San Diego

### DETACHED OUTBUILDING

Arcadia Custom Homes & Renovations, Charlotte, N.C.

### COMMERCIAL REMODEL

Allen Construction, Santa Barbara, Calif.

### INSURANCE RESTORATION

LaMantia Design & Construction, Brookfield, Ill.

# '80S FLASHBACK

*Though The Breakfast Club and Footloose are long gone, this bathroom remained*

By Doug Walter, AIA

What was it that made us designers (including myself) so crazy about big whirlpool tubs in the 1980s and well into the '90s? Was it Julia Roberts' bubble bath scene in *Pretty Woman*? The image of Al Pacino in *Scarface* in his gigantic bubble bath? Or perhaps the cheesy ads from the '70s and '80s for honeymoon resorts with those red, heart-shaped tubs. Maybe they fed a fantasy and created demand for the massive whirlpools with acres of tile deck around them that dominated the "luxury" bathrooms of 20 or 30 years ago.

Luckily, those relics of a bygone era are now being rethought, like this one, built in 1992 in a Denver suburb. The tub and deck ate up most the room, while the shower, with its '80s brass trim, was squeezed into a small corner. The shared vanity was pushed to another side, where the homeowners fought for control of the counter space between their two sinks. Lighting consisted of a brass Hollywood lightbar over the mirror and two giant cans spotlighting the tub.



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CREDIT

Another deficiency was that the bathroom was open to the master bedroom and the view consisted of a messy vanity. In the bedroom, a three-sided fireplace was meant to be the focal point, but it was off to the side of the bed, as was the television.

My associate Don Gibson and I tried several floor-plan options before hitting on this one. We closed off the bathroom from the bedroom, repositioned a new gas fireplace, and moved the access point to a door in the corner where the shower used

to be. This last decision opened up a large corner for a luxury megashower, with his and hers controls and heads. There's also a bench for shaving or sitting. The tile floor has an electric heat mat beneath, on a timer control. This year, Denver had a cold, wet spring, so the homeowners used that feature well into May.

One aspect of the design that the clients particularly like is the south-facing skylight. We offered the option of a moveable shade, but they declined, not minding the "hot spots" that the



**DESIGN:** Doug Walter, AIA, and Godden/Sudik Architects, Centennial, Colo.

**INTERIORS:** Kevin Dunn, Elements for Design, Denver

**REMODELER:** Chris Beasley, Aspen Builders, Highlands Ranch, Colo.

**TUB:** Victoria + Albert

**TUB & SHOWERS FAUCETS:** Brizo

**SINK:** Kohler Ladena Collection

**SINK FAUCETS:** Hansgrohe

**COUNTERTOPS:** Cambria "Minera" Jewel collection

**CABINETS:** Design-Craft

**FLOOR TILE:** Rex "Taiga"

**WALL TILE:** Mandala "Brio Piel" Sharkskin color #1138

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clear glass skylight throws on the bath below.

Finally, the new Victoria + Albert tub sits under the corner windows, with an elegant Brizo faucet and hand shower standing behind like a piece of jewelry. The elimination of the tub deck allows the floor to flow under and around the tub, incorporating it more into the room—it's a feature that is both retro and modern.

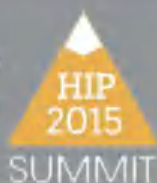
Lighting was redone, with frosted 2700K LED sconces mounted on the mirrors to either side of the user's face. In addition, two high-intensity LED downlights now sit above the shower, plus one surface LED fixture by the closet door.

All fixtures have their own dimmer switches for precise control. In total, for this small room, there are five lighting circuits with dimmers, but the owner reports, "Most of the time we don't even turn on the lights during the day since the skylight is enough." **PR**



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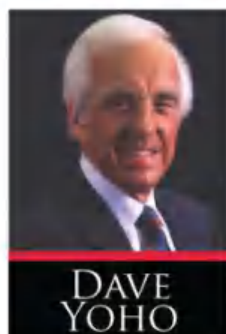
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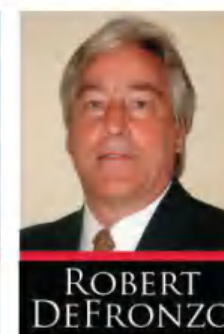
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PHOTO: FIAT CHRYSLER AUTOMOBILES

# A New Van Era

*Big changes over the past decade have resulted in more van styles  
and more options for tradesmen*

By Mike Morris

**T**he traditional go-to option for toting tools, materials, and people to and from the jobsite is cargo vans, but those familiar boxy haul-it-allers seemed like an endangered species until recently. That's because a major shift in the light-truck market within the past decade at first eliminated some van models, then added others sourced from overseas. Ultimately, these changes created all-new cargo and upfit-worthy trade vehicle categories.

Today remodelers have an almost unlimited range of work vehicles to choose from, and vans are again leading contenders. Better still, today's new vans come in a full spectrum of sizes that range from compact to "mini step-van" capacity.

## A Competitive Realignment

It used to be that if you wanted a van for your business you mainly shopped among similar wheeled boxes from Ford, GM, or Chrysler.

Now that list often begins with what many U.S. tradesmen once thought an unlikely contender: Mercedes-Benz. It was the brief Mercedes/Chrysler merger that killed off the original Ram Vans and brought the Sprinter to the U.S. The Sprinter was a game changer—a significantly larger standing-headroom van that really got today's cargo-van market rolling.

**Mercedes-Benz.** Vans from Mercedes are again in the news, but this time because of the introduction of a more conventional-size van called the Metris (opposite page, bottom). Due to roll out in October in both cargo and passenger trim aimed at commercial markets, the Metris is described as "right sized" for U.S. buyers. Equipped with a 4-cylinder gas engine (208 hp with 258 lb-ft of torque), this stylish hauler has a maximum payload of 2,502 pounds, optional power sliding doors on one or both sides, and a choice of liftgate or 270-degree-opening rear doors. With a starting



*The full-size ProMaster (right) is available with a V-6 gas or 4-cylinder EcoDiesel engine, two roof heights, and three wheelbases (up to 159 inches), and in cargo, chassis cab, and cutaway versions. The compact Ram ProMaster City (opposite) has a cargo area that is 87.2 inches long, 48.4 inches wide (between wheel wells), and 51.8 inches high; maximum payload is 1,883 pounds. The near-vertical sidewalls accommodate interior upfits, such as shelves or work surfaces.*

price of less than \$29,000, the Metris even offers some high-tech features found in the automaker's other vehicles, including "attention assist" to alert drowsy drivers and optional "lane-keeping assist" to prevent inadvertent vehicle wandering on the highway.

Full-size Mercedes-Benz Sprinter vans are still readily available for buyers seeking a higher-capacity cargo vehicle. High-roof models offer 78.2 inches of interior headroom, and Sprinters come in 144- and 170-inch wheelbase versions that have up to 530 cubic feet of cargo volume and a 5,508-pound payload. A 4-cylinder, dual-stage turbo diesel engine is standard, with a 6-cylinder, 188 hp diesel as an option. (Note that Sprinter and Metris information is available only at [mbsprinterusa.com](http://mbsprinterusa.com) and not on the main Mercedes-Benz website.)

**Fiat Chrysler.** Fiat's acquisition of Mercedes' former partner, Chrysler, has resulted in even more cargo van choices here in the U.S. Ram vans ([ramtrucks.com](http://ramtrucks.com)) now include a super-size ProMaster to compete in the "Sprinter category," and a compact ProMaster City to rival Ford's Transit Connect. Both are Americanized versions of the Ducato (full-size) and Doblo (compact) Fiat-designed-and-built vans that have long been popular in European light-commercial markets. Ram, after reviving its "standard" cargo van after a nearly three-year hiatus, has discontinued this model for 2016.

Introduced in 2014, the larger ProMaster (top photo) initially offered a 3.6-liter, 24-valve V-6 gas engine (280 hp, 260 lb-ft of torque), to which a 3.0-liter, 4-cylinder EcoDiesel engine (174 hp, 295 lb-ft of torque) has been added. This van is available in two roof heights and three wheelbases up to 159 inches, and in cargo, chassis cab, and cutaway versions, plus a commercial passenger-van model.

The Ram ProMaster City (opposite), new for 2015, is another entry in a new compact-van category that includes Ford's Transit Connect and the Nissan NV200. Like the Ford model, ProMaster City is built in Turkey and shipped to the U.S. for upfitting to buyer specifications. It is available in cargo or full-window "wagon" versions for commercial use with a 2.4-liter gas engine (178 hp, 174 lb-ft of torque), 131.7 cubic feet of cargo space, and a payload capacity of 1,883 pounds.

**Ford.** Originally built for the European market, Ford's Transit



PHOTO: FIAT CHRYSLER AUTOMOBILES



PHOTO: MERCEDES-BENZ

*The new Metris from Mercedes has a 4-cylinder gas engine, a 7-speed automatic transmission, and rear-wheel drive. The maximum payload is 2,502 pounds and towing capacity is 4,960 pounds. Cargo width is 66.3 inches (50 inches between the wheels); cargo length is 111.5 inches (105.4 inches with partition).*

Connect ([ford.com](http://ford.com)) rolled out in the U.S. in 2009, marking another departure from the van category's standard shapes and sizes. This compact car-like van offers a smaller cargo platform (from 77 to 128 cubic feet, depending on configuration), but delivers better fuel economy (25 mpg city/highway combined) than larger vans and is easier to maneuver in tight city streets.

The Transit Connect (top) is available in short or long wheelbase versions that can handle up to 1,620 pounds of payload. A 2.5-liter,



PHOTO: FORD MOTOR COMPANY

*The front-wheel drive Ford Transit Connect has a maximum payload is 1,620 pounds and a towing capacity of up to 2,000 pounds. The maneuverable short-wheelbase model offers 103.9 cubic feet of storage area; the long-wheelbase model has 128.6 cubic feet of storage. The larger Transit mini-step van, which replaces Ford's E-series vans, comes in three body lengths and three roof heights.*

4-cylinder gas engine is standard equipment, but can be specified with a compressed natural gas/liquid propane conversion package. An optional 1.6-liter, 4-cylinder turbo-assisted EcoBoost model is also available.

In addition to its Transit Connect, Ford last year followed in the Sprinter's tracks by introducing its Transit mini step-van, which replaces Ford's venerable E-Series vans. Transit comes in three body lengths (130 to 148 inches), with up to 487.3 cubic feet of interior volume, and three roof heights, with up to 77 inches of headroom. A dual rear-wheel version with a maximum payload of 4,650 pounds is also available. Engine choices include 3.5-liter EcoBoost turbo or 3.7-liter gas V-6.

### Traditional Vans Still in Demand

General Motors, which usually runs neck-and-neck with rival Ford in its vehicle lineup, has opted not to compete in the mega-size van category while continuing to maintain

*Chevrolet's City Express is a compact front-wheel drive van with a cargo area that is 82.8 inches long (to the seats), 48 inches wide (between wheel wells), and 53 inches high, for a clear volume of 122.7 cubic feet. Maximum payload is 1,500 pounds.*

its fleet of "standard" full-size vans under the GMC Savana and Chevrolet Express nameplates.

**Chevrolet.** That said, Chevy has introduced a compact van called the City Express (below), which is actually a rebadged NV200 van built by Nissan. The front-wheel drive van is equipped with a 2.0-liter, 4-cylinder engine rated at 131 hp (139 lb-ft of torque) and a continuously variable transmission. Like the Transit Connect, City Express was designed for maneuverability and fuel-efficiency in urban environments. The single wheelbase and body style comes with 122 cubic feet of cargo space and a maximum 1,500-pound payload capacity.

Like the NV200, the City Express offers a cockpit fitted out for business, with features such as laptop and hanging-file storage, recessed areas on the instrument panel for folders and documents, and a sliding storage drawer under the passenger seat, which also folds down to serve as a worktop.

**GMC.** Although the 2016 Express Cargo and its near-twin Savana Cargo (opposite, top) are still considered full-size vans, they have become the midsize niche between the large and new compact-van categories. Both are based on GM's heavy-duty 2500 and 3500 truck platforms and are available in regular and extended wheel-base lengths (135 and 155 inches), and chassis cab setups. Both offer standard 4.8-liter (285 hp with 295 lb-ft of torque) or optional



PHOTO: GENERAL MOTORS





PHOTO: GENERAL MOTORS

*The full-size Savana Cargo van from GMC (above) is available in two wheelbase lengths, 135 inches and 155 inches. A Vortec 6.0-liter V-8 engine is standard equipment, but three other engines are available, including a compressed natural-gas option.*

*Nissan's NV Cargo van (right) is available in three versions with standard and high-roof configurations, and a maximum cargo volume of 420.5 cubic feet.*



PHOTO: NISSAN

6.0-liter (342 hp, 373 lb-ft of torque) gas V-8 engines. Also available is a 6.6-liter turbo diesel rated at 260 hp and 525 lb-ft of torque.

**Nissan.** The NV Cargo van (above), which it introduced in 2011 and builds in Mississippi along with its Titan pickup trucks, is configured to compete against both traditional full-size and mini step-van competitors. Like the GM vans, it's available in 1500, 2500 HD, and 3500 HD versions; and like the Transit and Sprinter, it offers a high-roof model with 77 inches of headroom, although in cargo volume (maximum 420.5 cubic feet) it trails the bigger vans. Two gas engine options include a 4.0-liter

V-6 (261 hp, 281 lb-ft of torque) and a 5.6-liter V-8 (317 hp, 385 lb-ft of torque).

Nissan's NV200 Compact Cargo van is identical to its Chevy City Express cousin in engine, payload, and interior capacity. Notably, Nissan points out that this urban "mini" van is more than 4.5 feet shorter in length and 2.5 feet lower in height than traditional full-size, high-roof models, which translates into a tighter turning radius (36.7 feet) and better fuel economy—something any small-business owner can appreciate. **PR**

*Mike Morris is a former licensed remodeling contractor and journalist who writes about the home building and automotive industries.*

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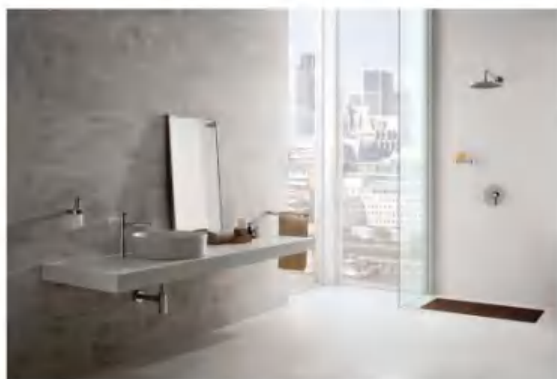
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# Product Introductions



**1** **Nora Lighting** has added to its series of Diamond II Retrofit LED recessed fixtures. The 5-inch aperture LED downlight features a 10.55-watt LED module producing 650 lumens with 90+ CRI for more realistic color rendition. An adjustable gimbal rotates 356 degrees and adjusts from 0 to 40 degrees. Suitable for wall-washing effects, accent lighting, and sloped-ceiling applications, the fixture offers a choice of three trims and a range of finishes. Nora's Unitized Thermal Management system ensures cool operation, and the downlight works with most leading-edge electronic dimmers and trailing-edge incandescent dimmers. It is cULus listed for damp locations and is Energy Star rated for more than 50,000 hours of performance. [noralighting.com](http://noralighting.com) **Circle No. 805 on reader service card**



**2** The Terra collection from **Graff** features 25 items from floor-mounted tub fillers and classic lavatory faucets to towel bars and tissue holders. The collection is characterized by contemporary, bold lines and fluid, minimalist shapes. Manufactured using brass, the Terra collection is available in polished chrome, brushed nickel, polished nickel, and olive bronze finishes. [graff-faucets.com](http://graff-faucets.com) **Circle No. 806**

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3

Silacrete tiles from **Tesselle** are a U.S.-made composite consisting of 50 percent recycled glass and 50 percent concrete that are available in a variety of finishes, including solid colors and digitally printed designs and photorealistic looks in a variety of colors. Suitable for indoor applications, such as countertops, backsplashes, floors, or walls, the tiles can also be used on walls outdoors. Brooke (shown) comes in six colors and in sizes from 6x6 inches to 18x18 inches. [tesselle.com](http://tesselle.com) **Circle No. 807**

4

The 16-gauge steel core of **Houzer's** Porcela Porcelain enamel undermount steel sinks makes them 65 percent lighter than cast iron while still providing a cast-iron look and feel. Porcela's nonporous, high-gloss surface is double-baked at 1,500°F, making it difficult to chip, scratch, or stain. Eight colors are available: White, Biscuit, Black, Slate, and Espresso, as well as Lemon, Mint, and Navy Blue (shown); and four shapes: bar/prep, single-bowl, large single-bowl, and offset single bowl. [houzersink.com](http://houzersink.com) **Circle No. 808**

5

**Klein Tools** has expanded its Tough Meter Test & Measurement product line with the NCVT-3 Non-Contact Voltage Tester With Flashlight. The tool identifies AC voltage in cables, cords, circuit breakers, outlets, etc., and works in the range from 12v to 1,000v AC. A handy, integrated flashlight works independently of the tester. The NCVT-3 is dustproof, waterproof, has a CAT IV 1000v safety rating, and offers drop protection of up to 6.6 feet. [kleintools.com](http://kleintools.com) **Circle No. 809**



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# Windows

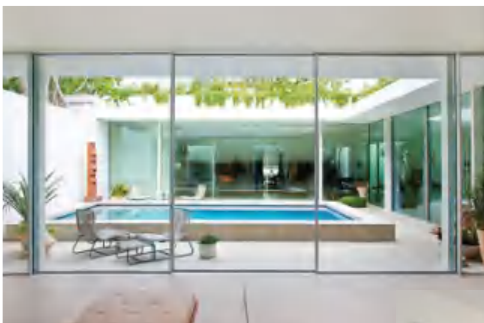


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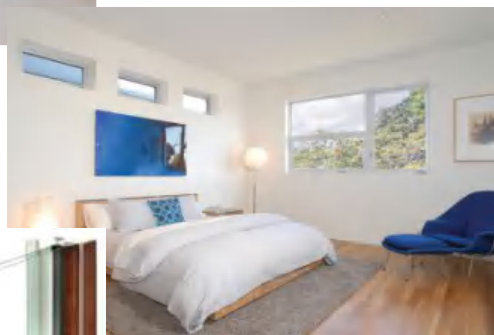
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4



5

**1** Two new offerings from **Innovative Glass** include LC Privacy Glass and SolarSmart. LC Privacy Glass (shown) allows you to electronically switch your glass from clear to frosted white with the touch of a button. It's available as completely glazed, pre-wired units in dozens of sizes, finishes, and shapes, ready for installation. SolarSmart glass is adaptive, using Suntuitive technology to automatically darken the glass as its surface gets hotter, then fade as the glass cools. SolarSmart requires no power, wires, or user involvement to control it. [innovativeglasscorp.com](http://innovativeglasscorp.com) **Circle No. 815 on reader service card**

**2** For homeowners seeking a window that fits well with traditional architectural styles, **Simonton Windows** offers its Madeira collection. According to the company, Madeira outperforms the energy efficiency of Energy Star standards with its ProSolar low-E glass (argon gas is standard). ProSolar Shade low-E glass and Eco3 triple-pane glass packages are also available. Custom looks can be achieved using a range of Decorum exterior colors and various decorative glass and grid options. [simonton.com](http://simonton.com) **Circle No. 816**

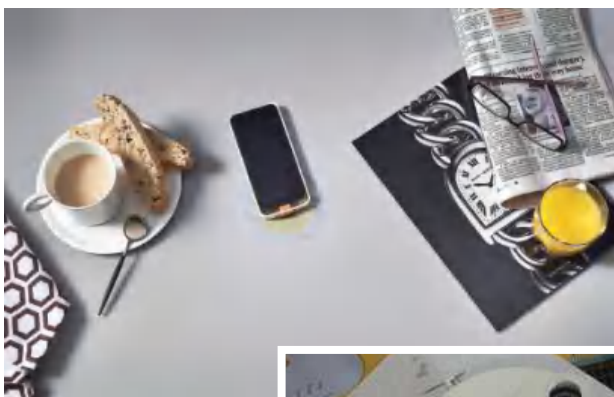
**3** After its success with the Pure super-slim sliding glass wall system, **Vitrocsa** is launching the Pure Window Line, which boasts the same minimalist aesthetic with 7/8-inch vertical jambs but at more competitive prices. Made in the U.S., Pure windows are available in a set number of configurations as sliding or fixed units and a 90-degree corner window. All units come standard with Pure's unique, patented ultra-flush threshold. [pure-windows.com](http://pure-windows.com) **Circle No. 817**

**4** **Western Window Systems** is introducing the Series 670, a customizable line of hinged windows. Designed with a 4½-inch frame depth, the series can be directly mulled to most of Western Window Systems' product lines—a unique quality in aluminum fenestration. The screens have been re-engineered and now feature concealed clips. Other upgrades include an improved hopper style to increase drainage, a slimmer sash lock, and thermally broken aluminum and high-quality stainless steel hardware. **Circle No. 818**

**5** The aesthetics of wood and the low-maintenance of vinyl come together in the **ProVia Aeris Wx1000 Series**. Pre-finished real oak, cherry, or maple is applied to the sash and frame interior for the look of an all-wood window. The windows can be custom sized to the nearest 1/8 inch, and the wood can be stained, sanded, and re-stained or painted. Other features include a low-E coating, a fusion-welded sloped sill to aid water drainage, and jamb pocket colors that coordinate with paint or stain colors. [proviaproducts.com](http://proviaproducts.com) **Circle No. 819**



# Countertops



1

**1** **DuPont** is building induction chargers into a select version of its Corian countertops. The Corian Charging Surface uses a transmitter hidden just below the countertop surface to wirelessly transfer energy to a receiver within or attached to smart devices, such as mobile phones or tablets. Nearly all smart devices can be charged with a charging ring from Duracell Powermat, but charging cases also are available, and some devices are already enabled with wireless charging capabilities. To wirelessly charge using Corian Charging Surface, users need only connect the ring or case to their mobile device and place it on a charging spot. Find local distributors at [corian.com/powerup](http://corian.com/powerup) **Circle No. 825 on reader service card**



2

**2** To quickly attach undermount sinks to stone countertops, **Z Keepers** has launched GoClips 5-Second Anchors, a slot-based sink mounting system. The clips don't require use of hammers, drills, or hammer drills to secure the sink. To install the clips and sink, use a grinder and diamond blade to cut a 1/2-inch slot in the underside of the countertop, then hold up the sink and secure it in place via a spring clip that's self-locking into the slot. Three clip sizes are available. [goclips.us](http://goclips.us) **Circle No. 826**

3



4

**3** **Wilsonart** has launched a new product, Solicor Compact Laminate, as well as added colors and textured finishes to its Solicor Laminate Collection. Solicor offers continuous color all the way to the edge, eliminating the brown line associated with traditional laminate fabrication. Solicor Compact Laminate is available in a 1/2-inch thickness, can be used horizontally or vertically, and is installed the same way as standard compact laminate. It is available in Linen (shown) and Black in matte and high-gloss finishes. [wilsonart.com](http://wilsonart.com) **Circle No. 827**



**4** Dekton by **Cosentino** is an ultra-compact surface made from glass, porcelain, and quartz using a proprietary "particle sintering technology," which uses heat and pressure to imbue the material with high strength, low water absorption, UV resistance, and resistance to scratches and thermal shock. Eight colors are being added, for a total of 23 available colors. (Shown: Makai, on island, and Galema, on rear wall and counter.) Dekton is suitable for interior and exterior use, including showers and floors. All eight colors will be available in large-format slabs of 56 by 126 inches and in three thicknesses. [dekton.com](http://dekton.com) **Circle No. 828**



5

**5** **Vicostone** recently added four colors to its line of quartz surfacing, each featuring unique veined looks in gray, brown, and white tones (BQ8660 Venatino shown here). The new colors fall into two separate color collections, with three colors added to the Designer Series, and one addition to the Romance Series. [vicostoneus.com](http://vicostoneus.com) **Circle No. 829**

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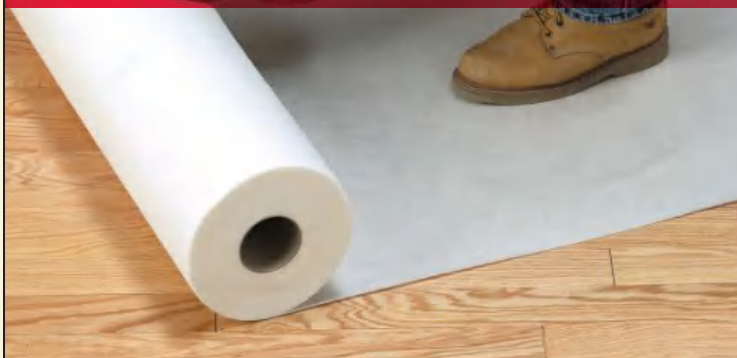
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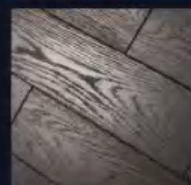
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# Value, Not Cost

## WHAT CAN LEGITIMATE REMODELERS DO TO COMPETE AGAINST UNLICENSED, UNCERTIFIED, UNINSURED CONTRACTORS WHO UNDERCUT THEIR PRICE?



### REPUTATION, RISK, AND LEGISLATION

We will probably never get away from weekend warriors and summertime carpenters. A guy in a pickup will always be cheaper, but we sell our projects on our reputation, not on price point. We need to continue educating homeowners about the risks of hiring unlicensed, uninsured contractors, and we need to join forces with our trades to push legislation on education and licensing for contractors.

**Emily Lindus, Vice President**  
Lindus Construction, Baldwin, Wis.



### HOMEOWNER EDUCATION SEMINARS

The best way to combat this is to educate the homeowners in the communities where we work. Most consumers have no idea what to look for when hiring a reputable contractor. We advertise and hold seminars on "How to avoid being taken by unethical contractors." Most local high schools and libraries want to add this type of seminar to their adult education classes. We drive home all the risks that come along with a non-professional contractor and the low bids that they usually provide.

**Jay Cipriani, President**  
Cipriani Remodeling Solutions, Woodbury, N.J.



### PROFESSIONALISM

This issue will be there as long as there is a remodeling industry that has little to no barrier to entry. The best thing that any of us can do is to be professional in interactions with customers to validate the value that we offer. Some consumers will never be willing to pay for quality products and services, but the majority of homeowners expect a professional-quality product and service.

**Chris Edelen, President/CEO**  
Edelen Marketing Associates, San Antonio



### VALUE AND HONEST REFERENCES

We take the high road and focus on our years in business, customer ratings, quality products, insurance and bonding, and the simplicity of our service, given that we sell, manufacture, and install. We refer potential customers to past customers, including those whose projects didn't quite go as planned, but who were happy when we were finished. We share our value story and are comfortable knowing that if someone is only interested in the lowest price, we are fine with having someone else help them with their needs.

**Holly Ollier, CEO**  
American Exteriors, Littleton, Colo.



### MORE THAN CRAFTSMANSHIP

There's a huge difference between a good craftsman and those who also strive for excellence through customer service and solid business practices. Communicate this to all your employees first—they go a long way in spreading the word about your company—then to your customers and community. This will help to advance not just your business, but the industry as a whole.

**Joy Kilgore, President**  
EBA PRIME, Suffolk, Va.

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